

Answering Nature's Call in Peace



If the Children feel like relieving themselves, they go to the nearby drain or the fields beyond. For their mothers and sisters, matters are even worse. They have to wait for night to fall. They can attend nature's call only under the cover of darkness. As if they were committing a crime.

But now things are changing for the 1000 odd residents of Karuvattupettai in Tiruchi district. TamilNadu. Gramalaya, a local non government organization, has constructed toilets for them. And there are special models for children. These are perhaps the first child friendly toilets in the country, says a report in 'The Indian Express'.

They consist of a row of 10 toilets on a raised platform. Each one of them is surrounded by a three feet high wall and has water, soap and a mug in one corner. These are meant to be used by children between three to six years. The toilets are connected underneath by a PVC pipe which connects them to a nearby underground drainage system. A simple but efficient system. Gramalaya has also constructed 20 other toilets for adults, which has proved to be a boon for the women of the locality. They do not have to wait for sunset to go to answer nature's call, as they say.

The 167 toilets are being maintained by self –help groups formed for the purpose. The group members take turns to keep the toilets clean and charge 50 paise for use.

By Moushumi Mohanty

Innovation in Sanitation

UNICEF noted that children, as a group, are most vulnerable to the health hazards associated with poor hygiene and inadequate sanitation systems, especially the lack of accessible basic latrines. Diarrhoea - a disease that

spreads most readily in environments various of poor sanitation - claims lives of approximately 2 million children each year, making it one of the top three fatal diseases in developing countries to-day. Regular hand washing and access to a toilet can significantly reduce child mortality and improve children's health and development.

The children in the target slums had to defecate in the open drains in front of their houses or had to walk in search of places of open defecation. After defecation, the children had to return homes without anal cleaning and hand washing due to lack of water facilities. They could wash only in their houses where water available. Pigs, mosquitoes bite, flies and other insects adding to their difficulties. The children had to defecate amidst faeces. After long discussion with the women self-help groups, the idea came out for constructing separate latrines for the children. It was also decided by the community not to charge any fee for the usage by the children. The Child Friendly Toilets (CFT) constructed by Gramalaya under the WaterAid Urban Slums Health and Sanitation Improvement Programme in Tiruchirapalli slums are utilized by children below 6 years in slums. As the CFTs are constructed adjacent to the community toilets, their maintenance is easy. A water tub is provided at the corner of the CFT with soap for washing hands after defecation by children. The caretaker of the community toilet teaches hand-washing and its importance to the children and also observes the hygienic behaviour of the user children. The CFT built by Gramalaya is the first of its kind in India and has an innovative design. Every day, about 235 children use the CFT both in the mornings and evenings. In the beginning, children were accompanied by their mothers as the latter taught the kids the basic ideas of toilet use and post - use hygiene including washing hands with soap. The children also learnt by observing each others



practice of hygiene. Children of the slums are happily using the child friendly toilets and practice hand washing using soap available in the toilets. The expenses for keeping soap and other cleaning materials are met from the income from pay and use toilets managed by the women groups.

Published by Gramalaya under Healthy Slums Healthy City Project supported by WaterAid. NewDelhi with collaboration of Tiruchi City Corporation. For more details, visit us at: www.gramalaya.in.

Vision of Gramalaya

Gramalaya foresees a society where people will have equal rights and access to protected Water, Sanitation, Health and improved income status without gender discrimination.

Mission of Gramalaya

- ◆ To encourage the oppressed people in the community especially women and children in getting justice, equality and participation in Education, Health, Water and Sanitation activities.
- ◆ To initiate action towards upliftment of the economically and socially downtrodden through active participation in the income generation activities.
- ◆ To ensure women's participation in decision making and implementation of community development works in coordination with their male counterparts leading to an overall improvement in health, social wellbeing and empowerment of the community.

CFTs in Tiruchi slums

So far 69 such child friendly toilets were constructed in the City Corporation of Tiruchirappalli with WaterAid support which are maintained by the women self-help groups as a part of community managed toilets. Similar models were also constructed in the rural parts for Anganwadis and schools. Based on the models created by Gramalaya, the city corporation has replicated the concept in the Integrated Sanitary complexes under TNUDP II project.

**For more details, please contact
Gramalaya**

No : 12C, 4th Cross West, Thillainagar,
Trichirappalli – 620 018.

Tel : 0431 – 2761263 / 0431 – 4021563, Fax : 0431 – 4021563

Website : www.gramalaya.in

email : gramalaya@airtelmail.in / gramalaya@hotmail.com

Published by Gramalaya - Tiruchirappalli & WaterAid



Gramalaya - Tiruchirappalli



Answering Nature's Call in Peace

